

**For information
on 10 February 2009**

LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

**Supplementary Information on
the Structure Review of the Pest Control Section**

Purpose

At the meeting of the LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene held on 9 December 2008, Members discussed the structure review of the Pest Control Section of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) (LC Paper Nos. CB(2)340/08-09(01) and CB(2)379/08-09(05)). This paper provides Members with further information on the review.

Structure Review of the Pest Control Section

2. As mentioned in LC Paper No. CB(2)340/08-09(01), in the provision of environmental hygiene services to the public, FEHD would from time to time conduct reviews of the internal structure of sections / units as and when necessary. The current review on the management structure of the Pest Control Section is one aimed at strengthening the monitoring of pest control service contractors and enhancing the planning and formulation of pest control strategies, coordinating and promoting community participation in pest control activities and operations so as to achieve better results.

Front-line Manpower Deployment Remains Unchanged

3. Since 2003, FEHD has set up pest control roving teams through outsourcing of services to augment the work of some 670 in-house staff working in the District Pest Control Sections. The contractors' roving teams and in-house teams work together to provide comprehensive pest control services in the territory. As mentioned in the two papers prepared for the previous Panel meeting, there would be no change to the manpower deployment of the front-line in-house staff of the Pest Control Section and the 1 400 workers employed by the contractors, hence the review would not affect front-line services.

Strengthening Front-line Contract Management

4. FEHD employs some 60 Environmental Nuisance Investigators (ENIs) on non-civil service contract (NCSC) terms to monitor the services provided by the contractors. Findings of an earlier review of NCSC staff situation confirmed that those posts are justified for long-term need and more suitably be filled by civil servants. Meanwhile, it is recommended in our recently completed internal structure review that the existing 60 posts for monitoring the work of service contractors could be increased, in order that the current supervisory load of 3 - 4 contractors' roving teams for one supervisory staff could be reduced to 2 teams per supervisory staff on average to enhance inspection frequency and to step up monitoring of service contractors.

5. We further recommend that the monitoring of service contractors be taken up by Foreman rank staff under the new management structure. In coming to this view, we have considered the following factors. First, "Senior Foremen" have undoubtedly longer service and more front-line management experience than "Foremen". However, as pest control service contracts are relatively less diverse, we believe that Foreman rank staff, who generally already have management experience in pest control work, should be capable of monitoring the performance of service contractors after receiving appropriate training in contract management. Secondly, just like other staff in the Department, all Foremen staff will be provided with professional and management training before they are posted to take up duties in the Pest Control Section, so that they will have a clear understanding of the job requirements. Front-line Foremen would also be provided with training from time to time during their service period so as to reinforce and enhance their skills in contract management.

6. Moreover, FEHD has in place a comprehensive contract management mechanism. The job and performance requirements that must be met by contractors are clearly set out in the tender documents of the service contracts, and staff of the contractors must meet the academic, training and experience requirements before they are allowed to perform the related pest control duties. All supervisory staff of the Department are required to monitor the on-site performance of the contractors in accordance with departmental operational manuals and guidelines. For example, the contract management staff of the various districts are required to systematically inspect the service standards of the contractors' roving pest control teams, and to conduct random checks on the records maintained by the contractors including staff's attendance records, relevant delivery notes / invoices / receipts issued by the suppliers of rodenticides / pesticides, the total quantity of rodenticides / pesticides used, the shelf-life and other technical information of the rodenticides / pesticides supplied, etc., to make sure that the contract requirements are met.

Enhancing the Coordination and Leading Roles of the District

7. Community participation plays an active role in the effective control of pests. It is also recommended in the internal structure review that the Pest Control Section should broaden the scope of its promotion efforts in the community, strengthen its leading role in coordinating resources between the various sectors, and promote pest control work at different levels of society, e.g. liaising with other government departments and district organisations, so as to achieve greater effectiveness in our pest control work.

8. Towards this end, we propose to create one Health Inspector (HI) post in every district under the new management structure of the Pest Control Section. Apart from providing managerial support to Senior Health Inspector (SHI), HI will be responsible for planning and developing operational strategies, maintaining regular contacts with other government departments and organisations (e.g. District Offices, District Lands Offices, District Councils, area committees and owners' committees, etc.), drafting discussion papers and mapping out publicity programmes for the coordination and promotion of district pest control activities / operations; and working closely with FEHD Headquarters in reviewing and revising terms and conditions of pest control service contracts to further improve the monitoring mechanism for service contractors. We believe that the proposed arrangement can help the Pest Control Section play a more proactive and leading role in the community, thereby enhancing our services.

Establishment of the Pest Control Section

9. Overall speaking, there will be a net increase of 59 civil service posts in the new management structure of the Pest Control Section, including 19 HI posts and 40 posts for the Foreman grade, to replace the 60 NCSC posts which are to be deleted. The expenditure involved will be absorbed by the Department through internal redeployment of resources.

Conclusion

10. Under the proposed new management structure, the manpower of both the Pest Control Section's front-line teams and the contractors' roving teams will remain unchanged. The level of services provided will be maintained. Moreover, the additional HI post in the districts will help in mapping out operational strategies for pest control programmes, promoting

publicity / public education activities in the districts, as well as liaising with the local community which are conducive to jointly building a healthy environment.

Advice Sought

11. Members are requested to note the above information.

**Food and Health Bureau
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
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